

IPEC Country Profile: United Republic of Tanzania

Child labour in Tanzania

Despite encouraging progress in recent years and a clear political will and national commitment to fight child labour, a difficult task lies ahead for the International Labour Organization's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO/IPEC) and its Tanzanian partners. Increased rural poverty over the last decade, a deterioration of the educational system and a worsening of the HIV/AIDS crisis have contributed to an increase in the number of child labourers.

A recent IPEC National Child Labour Survey estimates that 3.4 million out of 12.1 million children in Tanzania under the age of 18 work on a regular basis. One child in three living in rural areas is economically active compared with one in ten in urban areas. Child labour can be found in many types of economic activities in Tanzania, but is a particular problem in commercial agriculture, mining, domestic services, prostitution and the informal sector.

IPEC in Tanzania

Since the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Tanzania and the ILO in 1994 and the launching of its IPEC country programme in 1995, Tanzania has registered significant achievements in addressing the problem of child labour. To date, some 40 IPEC-sponsored projects have:

- withdrawn thousands of children from work and provided them with education;
- supported families of child labourers with alternative income opportunities;
- prevented at-risk children from becoming child labourers,
- raised awareness and mobilized civil society;
- carried out assessments;
- trained labour inspectors on child labour; and
- promoted protective legislation.

The success of the country programme over its relatively short existence attests to the strong commitment of IPEC's local social partner organizations – government agencies, employers' and workers' organizations and non-governmental organizations – that implement the individual projects.

Collaboration with other UN agencies and international organizations reinforces the positive impact of the programme. IPEC in Tanzania works closely with UNICEF, with which it has co-sponsored child labour assessments, developed a rapid assessment field manual and formulated specific intervention measures. This, for example, has made it possible to reach more target groups and stimulate greater community level action against child labour in several regions of Tanzania having a high incidence of child labour.

IPEC National Partners: Government Agencies, Organizations and Donors

Participating government agencies

Ministry of Education
Department of Information Services, Office of the Prime Minister
Ministry of Labour and Youth Development/Child Labour Unit

Participating employers' and workers' organizations

Association of Tanzanian Employers (ATE)
Conservation, Hotels, Domestic and Allied Workers Union (CHODAWU)
Tanzania Federation of Trade Unions (TFTU)
Tanzania Association of Miners and Construction Workers (TAMICO)

Participating non-governmental organizations

Dogodogo Centre for Street Children
Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)
Iringa Development Youth, Disabled and Children Care (IDYDC)
Kiota Women's Health and Development Organization (KIWOHEDE)
Kwetu Counselling Centre
National Social Welfare Training Institute (NSWTI)
Tanzania Council for Social Development (TACOSODE)
Tanzania Media Workers Association (TAMWA)
Tanzania Social Workers Association (TASWA)

Donors

Germany
Norway
United Kingdom: Department for International Development (DFID)
United States: US Department of Labor (USDOL)

Government policy towards child labour

The Government of Tanzania ratified ILO Convention No.138 on the minimum age for work in 1998 and the process leading to the ratification of Convention No.182 on the worst forms of child labour is at an advanced stage. A draft national policy on child labour has also been prepared. In 2000, the government put in place a new poverty reduction strategy in broad consultation with local stakeholders and its international development partners, which promises, among a number of policy initiatives, measures to improve income distribution and increase primary and secondary school enrolment and retention rates.

The government's accumulated experience in dealing with child labour, in conjunction with both this new policy environment and an improved economic outlook, provide a strong foundation for the implementation of the Time-Bound Programme for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

Factors contributing to child labour in Tanzania

Extreme Poverty:

Despite efforts since the mid-1980s to address economic and social problems, nearly

one-half (48 percent) of Tanzania's population of 33 million is considered to be basically poor, and about 27 percent live in abject poverty – or in households without sufficient income to meet basic nutritional requirements.¹ Rural poverty is more widespread and deeper than in urban areas, with basic needs poverty estimated at about 57 percent of the rural population and food poverty at 32 percent. Even though the overall policy environment and macroeconomic indicators have largely improved since the current government came to office in 1995, the incidence of poverty appears to have risen since the early 1990s. This reflects a worsening of income inequality and relatively weaker economic growth in rural areas hit by a series of failed harvests due to droughts and flooding.

Human welfare indicators have also lagged the improving macroeconomic conditions, primarily due to the HIV/AIDS crisis, which has dampened overall life expectancy and increased mortality rates. This is reflected in the UNDP's Human Development Index, which ranks 174 countries in terms of life expectancy, education and real income per capita. In 2000, Tanzania fell to a rank of 156 compared with 144 in 1996.

Persistent poverty and cutbacks in social services over the past decade have made it difficult for many parents to meet the basic needs of their children, including school fees and materials. Economic hardship has in some cases prompted a breakdown in traditional norms and values that bind the extended family and clan members together and act as a social safety net. As family resources become scarcer, many children outside the nuclear family – orphans or stepchildren – are abandoned or neglected and end up as child labourers.

The deterioration of living conditions in rural areas has also encouraged urban migration, including that of children and youth who migrate to urban areas in search of jobs, but generally only find marginal or casual employment.

Deterioration of the educational system:

In 1980, 98 percent of primary-school-age children in Tanzania were enrolled in school. However, sharp reductions in government expenditures for social services prompted by a severe economic crisis in the early 1980s resulted in a drastic reduction in the quality of education. As a consequence, by 1988, enrolment rates had dropped to a low of 71 percent. Since then, primary school enrolment has regained some lost ground, but still was only 78 percent by 1997, and the system continues to be plagued with quality and infrastructure problems.

It must be noted that the gross enrolment figures tend to overstate the number of children actually receiving education, as many poor children, particularly in rural areas, only attend school sporadically and some 30 percent drop out before finishing the seven years of compulsory education. Only six percent of Tanzanian children continue to secondary school.

In addition to the fact that many desperately poor families depend on their children's income to help pay for basic needs, and thus value work over school, there are a number of other reasons why enrolment rates are still well below 20 years ago.

¹ Government of Tanzania: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, (2000).

These include: outmoded teaching and disciplinary methods; low teacher competence, motivation and salaries; school fees (introduced in the late 1980s); poor infrastructure and lack of materials; and early marriages for girls.

HIV/AIDS Epidemic:

The HIV/AIDS epidemic has yet to reach its peak in Tanzania. The number of AIDS orphans is currently estimated to be well over half a million. The epidemic has the potential to kill at least one - fourth of the country's entire adult population over the next 15 years if left unchecked.

HIV/AIDS has placed a burden on an already strained education system with increased teacher turnover, loss of experienced teachers, more orphans with special needs, fewer resources, and problems of social ostracism in the classroom.

Socio-economic indicators	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Population (millions)	25.5	29.6	30.5	31.3	32.9	33.0
▪ Urban population (millions)	5.3	8.0	8.6	9.2	9.8	10.4
Population growth	3.1	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.4
Life expectancy at birth				48	47	
Adult illiteracy – female (% of total)	48.5	40.5	38.8	37.2	35.7	34.4
Adult illiteracy – male (% of total)	23.2	19.0	18.2	17.4	16.7	16.0
Real GDP growth (%)	5.4	3.5	5.3	3.5	4.0	4.7
Agriculture, value added (% GDP)	48	46	48	48	48	48

Sources: World Bank, World Development Indicators,

Sectors Associated With the Worst Forms of Child Labour

- **Commercial sexual exploitation**

Broad consensus exists that child prostitution is a form of “forced labour” and, therefore, a worst form of child labour. Children, mostly girls, are often lured or recruited by traffickers with promises of lucrative work in the cities, only to end up in underground brothels where they are abused and exploited.

Child prostitution is on the rise in Tanzania, especially in the densely populated urban and suburban areas. Girls under 15 years old are known to be working in nightclubs, liquor shops and brothels. Most of them end up as commercial sex workers as a means of survival.

Early and forced marriages have also contributed to child prostitution, as young girls who decide to run away from forced marriages find the street their only alternative. These children face a very high risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and

other sexually transmitted infections.

- **Mining and Quarrying**

Mining and quarrying is a rapidly expanding sector of the Tanzanian economy. While child labour is not a problem at large-scale sites under the control of international companies, it is a serious problem at the growing number of smaller “artisanal” sites. A rise in child labour in this activity is clearly reflected in an increase in primary school dropouts in schools close to mining and quarrying sites. It is estimated that the dropout rate in such schools ranges between 30 and 40 percent.

Children at these sites work both on the surface and underground and face all of the health and personal risks generally associated with this inherently dangerous work, including: inhaling of dust; injury or death from blasting, mine collapse, and flooding; and silicosis. In addition, the close proximity of children and adults can lead to violence and sexual abuse; hence, these children also face the risk of being infected with HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

- **Commercial Agriculture**

Agriculture accounts for nearly 50 percent of GDP and is Tanzania’s single largest employer. Child labour in commercial agriculture is mainly associated with sugarcane, sisal, tobacco, tea, coffee, cloves, and cut-flower plantations and is primarily concentrated in the Arusha, Iringa, Kilimanjaro, Mbeya, Morogoro, Rukwa, Tabora, Tanga and Zanzibar regions.

Children, both girls and boys, working in this sector generally work very long hours and in extreme weather conditions. They are exposed to hazardous chemicals and risk physical injuries, such as snakebites and cuts. Many commercial farms are located far away from community residential zones and children living and working in such isolated areas have little, if any, chance of attending school.

- **Domestic Service**

Many girls aged between the ages of 9 and 15 who migrate from rural to urban areas are employed as domestic servants. Popularly known in Tanzania as “house girls”, they toil mostly for working and middle-class families. Although this is a less inherently dangerous form of child labour, the conditions under which it is generally performed lead to its classification as a worst form of child labour.

The working environment is often characterized by long periods of isolation and long working hours, leading to physical and psychological trauma. It is estimated that many children in this sector work between 14 to 18 hours a day. It is also true that many are not properly paid, as some employers charge for the food and accommodation given to the children. Sometimes payment is only in kind (e.g. second-hand clothes). These girls also risk physical and sexual abuse by employers or their family members.

- **Urban Informal Sector**

The urban informal sector work performed by children, apart from being hazardous and exploitative, also exposes them to drug trafficking and drug abuse.

Recent media reports have singled out the Kinondoni and Temeke districts in Dar es Salaam as notorious areas for illicit drug business, going as far as involving primary school pupils. Often children working in small garages are involved in drug abuse while others are bribed by rich dealers to participate in drug trafficking for the main reason that children, innocent as they are, are unlikely to be spotted or suspected.

Tanzania's Time-Bound Programme

What is essentially new about the TBP concept for the IPEC country programme in Tanzania is that it is a more comprehensive, integrated and "country-owned" approach to combating the worst forms of child labour than in the past. It aims to strategically link actions against child labour to the national development effort and seeks the support of a broad social mobilization. It sets specific goals with clear targets and timeframes for achieving them.

Successful implementation of the programme will, however, require a very solid social foundation in terms of awareness levels and community mobilization. It will also require high and sustained commitment from, and partnership with, international organizations, the donor community, as well as from the government and civil society.

Since the government's announcement that Tanzania would become a pilot country for the TBP initiative in May 2000, substantial preparatory work has been undertaken, including:

- a review of the national institutional capacity and policy framework;
- six Rapid Assessment Surveys on the worst forms of child labour in selected sectors in order to fill in the existing data and knowledge gaps; and
- a new National Child Labour Survey to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of the extent and nature of child labour in Tanzania.

A national roundtable on the Time-Bound Programme was held in late April 2001, comprising a wide range of social partners and including high-level government participation. This roundtable resulted in a decision to eradicate the worst forms of child labour associated with the five sectors described above: commercial sexual exploitation, mining, domestic service, commercial agriculture and the urban informal sector. Timeframes for achieving this for each sector were also established.